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RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 0257

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 000547

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/03/2019  
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [TS](#) [CA](#)  
SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER REPRIMANDS CANADIAN AMBASSADOR  
FOR ELECTIONS AIDE-MEMOIRE

REF: TUNIS 525

Classified By: CDA Marc Desjardins, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Canadian Ambassador Bruno Picard told the Charge late July 30 that he was recently convoked by Foreign Minister Abdelwaheb Abdallah to be reprimanded for the aide-memoire that Ottawa delivered on the upcoming Tunisian elections the previous week (reftel). Picard said that the conversation was civil but that the Minister flatly rejected the Canadian approach, and made clear to the Ambassador that he saw the Canadian document as based on false information, implying that Picard was reporting incorrectly to his capital.

¶2. (C) Abdallah handed Picard a five page document, which Picard described as laying out that everything is perfect. Abdallah made a point of telling Picard that the document was not a response to the aide-memoire but an "information document" so that Picard would know exactly what is happening in the country. Picard said that the document attempted to address some of the specifics in the Canadian complaint and that he would provide us a copy.

¶3. (C) Picard said that Abdallah told him quite directly that he would not have received Picard if it had not been for the need to discuss the aide memoire. Picard had requested a farewell call since he departs post for retirement in a few weeks. Picard said that in his judgment the Canadian approach to the GOT will have absolutely no effect on Tunisian behavior, but at least his government can tell interested constituencies that they had made the attempt. The only time Abdullah did not have a ready reply, Picard said, is when the Canadian told him that the GOC was only attempting to tell a friend that they were hurting themselves, and was it not reasonable for one friend to tell another if that is the case. Picard added that if the United States at some point chooses to make an approach in the same vein, not to link it with the Canadian action. Picard remains concerned about possible GOT retribution against his embassy.

¶4. (C) Comment: Abdallah's reaction is not surprising and is a reminder of how much the GOT despises criticism.  
DESJARDINS